MR. JERMYN'S RACQUET.

I.

It had been an awkward meeting for both in the long crowded, lamp-lit drawing room of the White Lion, but so far they had both got well through it.

It was autumn. The waters of the broad bay lay still as glass, shimmering in the pale moonlight. From the windows of this hotel you had a fine view of the bay, away down over the tops of the other houses. The hotel stood upon an eminence, overlooking the whole watering place. Behind it stretched a long garden, backed by a fir wood, and upon the right was a lawn and a tennis court. In the front, the steep white road coming from the watering place led up to the very steps of the house. Its sign—if one may talk of the sign of so very fine and fashionable an hotel—was the White Lion, and it was rather a funny name, for the watering place itself was never known by any other than Little Souris. Why Little Souris pronounced according to the English sound of the spelling) should have become universally called so, nobody knew, for it was undeniable that its legitimate geographical name was Catchington. For an imaginative person, at any rate, who could believe the original idea to have been that this little watering place resembled a mouse, curled cosily up between two high cliffs, and looking sleepily out upon the broad bay, it was a very pretty idea. Whether it was the pretty idea, or the quaint old picturesque houses, or the sunny soft air, or the broad blue bay, nobody could say, but year by year the popularity of Little Souris and of the White Lion grew.

These two, Mr. Jermyn and Miss Raymond, had met in the drawing room of the hotel this evening before every one assembled there; in the very surprise and confusion of the meeting they had recognized each other publicly; and having once done so, had drifted into rather a constrained conversation upon general topics, both no doubt turning over in their own mind the probabilities and improbabilities of any of the seventy or eighty people present knowing.

Not that there was really anything very much out of the ordinary to know. An intimacy, ripening into something more; a misunderstanding; and a seperation. Three very common chapters, no doubt, in a very hackneyed type of romance. Still, one's own romance is apt to be all the world to one's self, let it be hackneyed to the rest of the world as it may; and also there are ways and ways of treating a misunderstanding. By Mr. Jermyn's and Miss Raymond's ways, it is absolutely certain that each would have stared straight past the other in a solitary picture gallery, or would have sat silently side by side through the dreariest of entertainments—so long as they had not been startled into doing anything else. But Mr. Jermyn had, so to speak, burst upon Miss Raymond; Miss Raymond had started, flushed a faint pink, and bowed slightly; and Miss Raymond's aunt, a good-humored dowager, after first casting one astonished stare, had bowed also. To cover the embarrassment of all this, they had, as it were, been driven into a conversation.

There was to be a great tennis tournament on the morrow, and Miss Raymond, to fill up a lengthy pause, had just somewhat nervously inquired if Mr. Jermyn intended to play. Before he had time to answer for himself, some one else sitting near interrupted quickly.

"Why, Miss Raymond, is it possible that you can know Mr. Jermyn and yet think it necessary to ask him such a question?"

She laughed more easily; it was much more comfortable that another should join in the conversation. "Then you will play as much as ever, Mr. Jermyn?"

"Rather more, I belive," he answered, slowly. "I came over from Bresswood especially for to-morrow's match."

"Did you bring your racquet with you, Jermyn?" called out a voice from the other side of the room.

"Of course," smiled Mr. Jermyn.

The last speaker came strolling forward, and laughed as he came.

"It is the most peculiar infatuation Mr. Jermyn has for that racquet of his," he said, crossing his hands upon the back of a chair near Miss Raymond, and speaking to her. "As you seem to be old acquaintances, perhaps you can throw some light upon the matter, Miss Raymond? He must have paid a small fortune in getting it renetted and reloaded; but buy a new one he positively will not. He solemnly assured me the other day that he would rather miss the best match in the world than play with any other."

The color had all gone out of Miss Raymond's face now. She answered rather stiffly:

"I should think it quite possible that Mr. Jermyn would keep to his resolution."

"Yes, I shall keep to it," said he, rising lazily and bending over a pile of music on the piano. "I think when one says a thing one ought to stick to it; and when one plays with a racquet one ought to stick to the racquet."

A laugh broke out all over this corner of the room; every one was listening now to the discussion about the racquet.

"Then you really have registered a vow to that effect, Jermyn?"

"Oh—a vow!" objected he, "That is a strong expression."

"It must be something quite as solemn—"

He laughed. "The simple fact of the matter," he explained, "is that I once happened to remark that I would never play with any other. Now, having once said so, of course I never could play with any other—successfully. At all events I should object to try."

"This borders on the unearthly," laughed a voice in the corner.

"Is that the proper word to use?" observed another. "I think I shall ask Miss Raymond."

"Please do," said Mr. Jermyn, looking coolly round at the seat behind him.

But Miss Raymond had already left the room.

II.

She had gone straigh out of the room along a narrow passage leading into a side hall; and, opening a glass door at the end of the hall, had drawn a long, deep breath of the cool night air, and stood in her low-cut pale pink dress looking out into the moonlit garden.

Aurora—that was her name; a most unfortunate name for a plainer woman, but the one of all others suited for her. No one could have ever cast a glance at her and doubted that she was born to do aught but shine. Her handsome, well-held figure, beautifully moulded face, her wide, iris blue eyes, the very fairy-like brilliance of her golden hair, each by itself seemed to proclaim the nature of the woman. There was much power, and yet something marvellously sweet in each and in all. There was something grand about her; it was impossible to look at her without feeling certain that, besides being an exceptionally beautiful, she was an exceptionally clever woman; and if there was a fault—and when is there not a fault?—one would have guessed at once, and guessed rightly, that its name was pride. Just now it seems as if she were quivering under some blow which had fallen on her—her face looked colorless as a snow flake in the light of the moon.

"It was my own fault for introducing the subject," she muttered, passionately; "but surely he might have spared me! When I had spoken to him, when I had agreed to let bygones be bygones, the hateful incident comes in through the means of the racquet once more. I wish I had never seen it!—I wish I had never seen Douglas Jermyn!"

She stood there, the night wind blowing about her. Then, seeming suddenly to recollect the chilliness of the evening, she shivered and shut the door again. She went along a passage to the left, and suddenly gave a great start, and stood motionless. Upon a little hall table beside her was lying a bundle of wraps, and a strong-looking, large-sized racquet. She first stared at it, and then, seemingly in answer to an irresistible impulse, undid the strap of the wraps, and held the racquet in her hand.

"So here you are!" she muttered half laughingly and half in anger.

Just at that moment there was a sound of feet coming along the passage, and, with a terrified start, she began to try to do up the strap again. Then, realizing the hopelessness of getting it fastened in time, she went flying up the stairs, with the racquet still in her hand. The stairs were of dark polished oak, and her soft pink dress made a faint swish as it swept over them. Upon the second landing she paused and listened. The delicate color had come into her face again with the rapid flight, and there was a glimmer of amusement in her handsome eyes as she looked down, in a half-ashamed way, at the racquet.

"Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo," rang out eight times from a clock in some hidden recess far below; and when the sound had died away, there came a faint creek and a deep silence—so deep that it was omisous. She took one step down again, hesitated for a moment just underneath a rose-colored lamp, and then, turning once more, fled like a panic-stricken deer, and locked herself into a room not far distant. Once inside, she sank down into a chair, and, looking piteously at the racquet, burst into half-hysterical laughter. There was but a faint light in the room, and that was the moonlight. Everything was casting its long, unearthly shadow. And as she noted the long, drawn-out shadow of the racquet upon the wall she began ruminating about the last time she had held this racquet.

The last time! yes, that was what she wanted to think about. She wanted to remember nothing about the first time. Douglas Jermyn had been playing with this racquet the first time she had met him; a bright, new, gleaming racquet it was then. It had seemed to flash in the sunshine; and she had looked at it, and she had held it. That was the first time. It was impossible to forget; but she wanted to stifle all recollection of that, and to remember only what came after. Ah! there had been so many pleasant things that now, to-night, with the racquet in her hand, it was difficult to steel herself into remembering only the pain. But by the old sensation she was feeling the bitter consciousness that the wound she had thought half healed was just as open as ever, she knew she must steel herself—and so she began resolutely.

She imagined herself standing with Douglas Jermyn once more at the window of a breakfast room. It was his birthday. He had a tiny heart-shaped, jewel-set locket open in his hand; and inside the open locket was her own miniature. It was her birthday present to him. Her cheeks burned fiercely in the pale moonlight, as she remembered all that he had said, standing there, with that miniature in his hand. The heart was to be as precious to him as his own heart; it was to bring him good fortune; and he was to treasure it all his life. She remembered every word as if he had spoken it yesterday.

Then she passed on to the following day. How, when her aunt and she were out driving, some one told them that a friend of theirs—and a friend of Mr. Jermyn's—had been unexpectedly called home to New Zealand; and how they had driven to his chambers—for he was a barrister—to bid him good-by. He was to have been Douglas Jermyn's best man at the wedding, and it was the least they could do.

What a hot day that was—and how well she remembered it! She was sitting in a cool corner of the room, putting in a word now and again, and laughing at her aunt's lively chatter. Then, all of a sudden, she started. There was Douglas's racquet! What kept her from exclaming at once she could not tell; but she silently stretched out her hand for it, and held it just as she held it now. Should she ever forget the shock? Underneath the racquet, carelessly thrown down—carelessly tossed aside, no doubt—and in a friend's room—not even in his own room—was the locket with her miniature. She put the racquet silently on the top of it, cut to the quick, and went home too angry even to think—to Douglas Jermyn.

To be Continued.

Loss of Flesh and Strength, with poor appetite, and perhaps slight cough in morning, or on first lying down at night, should be looked to in time. Persons afflicted with consumption are proverbially unconscious of their real state. Most cases commence with disordered liver, leading to bad digestion and imperfect assimilation of food—hence the emaciation, or wasting of the flesh. It is a form of scrofulous disease, and is curable by the use of that greatest of all blood cleansing, anti-bilious and invigorating compounds, known as Dr. Pierce's "Golden Medical Discovery."

The Dissensions in the Imperial Cabinet.

LONDON, May 24.—Referring to the reported split in the cabinet over the crimes in Ireland act, the Dublin Freeman's Journal says the retirement of Sir Charles Dilke or Mr. Chamberlain from the cabinet would be a far more disastrous blow to the government than the resignation of Earl Spencer. The resignation of either of the two first named, the Journal thinks, would cripple the government hopelessly during the rest of the session and prejudice their chances for success in the general elections.

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A Birmingham company is making 30,000 rifles for the amear of Afghanistan.

The Italians and Abyssinians had a conflict near Massowah. The Italians lost one officer and 3 men.

—Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator is pleasant to take; sure and effectual in destroying worms. Many have tried it with best results.

The Indian government proposes with a loan of $50,000,000 to rapidly strengthen the railway system of India.

—Every year increases the popularity of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. Recommended for all pulmonary troubles.

It is stated the dynamiter Cunningham has shown symptoms of insanity since he has been confined in Chatham prison.

—Mrs. George Simpson, Toronto, says: "I have suffered severely with corns, and was unable to get relief from treatment of any kind until I was recommended to try Holloway's Corn Cure. After applying it for a few days I was enabled to remove the corn, root and branch—no pain whatever, and no inconvenience in using it. I can heartily recommend it to all suffering from corns."

The Austrian government is drafting a bill for the late recognition of the Anglican church, which has hitherto been only tolerated in Austria.

—A field of corns.—Thomas Sabin of Eglington, says: "I have used Holloway's Corn Cure with the best results, having removed ten corns from my feet. It is not a half way cure or reliever, but a complete extinguisher, leaving the skin smooth and clear from the least appearance of the corns."

Suicided at Blackheath.

LONDON, May 25.—Lieut. Shock, assistant naval constructor of the United States navy, on special duty at the royal college, Greenwich, suicided to day by shooting at Blackheath.

—Headache is caused by disordered Stomach, nervous irritation and poor circulation. Whatever may be its cause, Burdock Blood Bitters is the best remedy. 246

Private letters from Posen and Silesia describe the present expulsion by Germany at Russia's request of Russian Poles from those provinces as attended with the most cruel and heart-rending incidents.

—Mrs. Ira Mulholland, Oakville, was cured of Dyspepsia and oft-recurring bilious attacks by that unfailing liver regulator Burdock Blood Bitters. 246

A serious riot occurred at Paris yesterday between the communists and the police. The latter insisted upon the former not carrying a red flag. According to one report ten persons, including two policemen, were seriously wounded. Another account says five persons were killed.

—No other preparation meets the wants of the debilitated system as Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

Seized by the French.

SHANGHAI, May 24.—The British steamer Waverly with cargo of spelter has been seized by the French on the ground that her cargo is contraband of war.

—Miss F. Malloy, Erin, tried for two years to cure bilious headache, poor circulation, and other chronic ills. Two bottles of Burdock Blood Bitters cured her. 246

A Skirmish Near Suakim.

SUAKIM, May 24.—An armed train to day surprised a body of rebels tearing up the new railway and opened fire upon them. It is estimated the rebels lost several hundred.

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